

# The Research Passport – information for researchers

The Research Passport is the new method of application for researchers who require either an Honorary Research Contract or Letter of Access (non-NHS) to conduct research activities in the Trust.

## What is the Research Passport?

The Research Passport is an application form that provides information about the researcher and his/her proposed research activities for the NHS Trust that will host the research. The form is completed by the researcher and his/her substantive employer who has responsibility for confirming that pre-engagement checks have been completed.

## Who does not need a Research Passport?

You will not need a Research Passport (or an honorary research contract) if:

- you are employed by an NHS organisation; or
- you are an independent contractor (e.g. GP) or employed by an independent contractor; or
- you have an honorary clinical contract with the NHS (e.g. clinical academics); or
- you are a student who will be supervised within clinical settings by an NHS employee or HE staff member with an honorary clinical or research contract.

## NHS Researchers and Clinical Academics

Researchers that have a substantive employment contract or honorary clinical contract with another NHS organisation **do not** need an Honorary Research Contract (HRC) with CUHT. They should request a Letter of Access (NHS) and complete a Letter of Access Information Form (see Appendix 1) which requires their NHS employer or the NHS Trust that issued the honorary clinical contract to confirm that appropriate pre-engagement checks are in place for their research activities. If satisfactory checks are in place, the R&D Office will issue the researcher with a Letter of Access (NHS).

## Who needs a Research Passport?

If you are not in any of the above categories and you have no contractual relationship with the NHS, you *may* need a Research Passport. Check with the CUHT R&D department who will confirm whether you will need a Research Passport and will determine whether you should be issued with an HRD or Letter of Access (non NHS). A Research Passport may be project-specific or may be valid for a period of three years for a number of projects.

It is the responsibility of the researcher and their substantive employer to put in place a Research Passport.

**The Principal Investigator must apply for permission to conduct the research in the NHS organisation. The Research Passport does not remove the need to apply to the NHS organisation for permission or to apply for ethical review.**

### **Application process**

- The researcher contacts the R&D office for advice.
- R&D Office identifies the need for a Research Passport and determines whether an HRC/Letter of Access (non-NHS) is appropriate. This is confirmed with the researcher.
- Researcher submits Research Passport, with original documentation, to R&D Office or a Letter of Access Information Form as appropriate.
- R&D Office assesses the Research Passport and issues HRC/LoA as appropriate
- Once R&D Office issue the letter of permission to the PI the research may begin.
- R&D Office sends a copy of the signed HRC/LoA to the substantive employer/place of study.

### **How do I obtain and complete a Research Passport?**

Contact the HR department at your place of employment/study. The form may be downloaded from the NIHR website:  
[www.nihr.ac.uk/systems\\_research\\_passports.aspx](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/systems_research_passports.aspx)

### **Pre- engagement checks - Important Information**

#### **Criminal Record Disclosures**

When a researcher plans to conduct research activities that will require a criminal record disclosure the researcher's employer/place of study should arrange for the disclosure to be obtained.

If employers/places of study have arrangements in place that require their employees/students to declare any subsequent changes in their criminal record, criminal record disclosures obtained **in the year prior to completion of the Research Passport** application may be used. Where such arrangements are not in place, only criminal record disclosures obtained in the previous six months are deemed to be appropriate.

#### **Occupational health assessment**

The occupational health service of the researcher's substantive employer/place of study should confirm, so far as is possible, that the individual is fit for the research activities she/he will be undertaking, in order to protect the health and safety of the researcher and others.

The Department of Health recommends checks for tuberculosis disease/immunity and the offer of hepatitis B immunisation, with post-immunisation testing of response, and the offer of tests for hepatitis C and HIV as standard health clearance checks for new healthcare workers. For those who will perform exposure-prone procedures (EPPs) for the first time, additional health clearance should also be undertaken.

In some cases it may be necessary to undergo additional screening in one NHS organisation because of the nature of the environment where you will be carrying out research. For example, if you are working with immune-compromised individuals you may have to undergo additional screening in line with the policy of the department in which you will be undertaking research. **The R&D office will let you know if you need to have additional checks. Please add the written evidence of these checks to the attachments to your Research Passport.** If any additional checks are undertaken by an NHS organisation, this will be documented in Section 7.

The Research Passport system places an ongoing obligation on researchers to seek professional advice about the need to be tested if they have been exposed to a serious communicable disease.

If additional vaccinations are required, these should be identity validated.

### **Submitting the Research Passport**

- Submit the completed Research Passport form to the R&D office at the lead NHS organisation where you wish to undertake your research. The lead NHS organisation may be the R&D office that is nearest to you, or the one that you originally approached about the project.
- Provide original copies of all documents.
- The R&D office will complete the shaded sections of the form, take a photocopy for its records and return the original Research Passport form and documents to you.
- The R&D Office will issue your HRC/Letter of Access (non-NHS) as appropriate.
- The R&D office will take copies of the Research Passport and attachments for its records to provide an auditable system. Please note that, in accordance with criminal record disclosure guidance, photocopies of criminal record disclosures are not retained.
- Once the shaded part of Section 8 has been completed and the form and documents have been returned to you, you have a complete Research Passport.
- The Research Passport will be valid for the duration of the project or for three years, as indicated in Section 8. You should keep it safe so

that you can use it to apply to any other NHS organisation for an honorary research contract or letter of access.

To obtain an honorary research contract or letter of access from another NHS organisation listed on your Research Passport, you should submit the valid Research Passport (with the shaded sections completed) and the **original documents** to the R&D office at that NHS organisation. As before, a photocopy will be taken and an honorary research contract or letter of access issued.

### **Appendix to Research Passport**

- **Ensure that you keep your Research Passport up to date.**
- **Inform any NHS organisation where you are conducting research of any change in details, e.g. employment status, registration status, criminal record etc. Any failure to do so may result in termination of your honorary research contract or letter of access.**
- **Additions and amendments to the Research Passport appendix should be countersigned by the relevant R&D office.**
- **The R&D office will take a photocopy of any amendments and additions to the Research Passport.**
- **If you are taking on an entirely new research activity find out if you need additional pre-engagement checks.**